

**DURABLE HYDROPHILIC NONWOVEN WEBS
AND ARTICLES FORMED THEREFROM**

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Nonwoven webs in accordance with the present invention include multicomponent fibers bonded by a multiplicity of bond sites to form a coherent web. The multicomponent fibers include a first component formed of a hydrophobic polypropylene and a second component formed of a blend of a hydrophobic polyolefin and a hydrophilic melt additive. This second component is disposed at the surface of the fibers. The hydrophilic melt additive-modified polyolefin component can be arranged in various configurations in the cross-section of the fiber and the fibers can have various cross sections. For example, the hydrophilic component can occupy a portion of the surface of the fiber, as would occur for example with a side-by-side or segmented pie multicomponent fiber configuration. Alternatively, the modified hydrophilic polyolefin can occupy substantially the entire surface of fiber, as for example by producing the fibers in a sheath core configuration with the hydrophilic modified component forming the sheath. A particularly preferred configuration is a sheath-core bicomponent fiber where the hydrophobic polypropylene forms the core and the modified hydrophilic polyolefin forms the sheath.